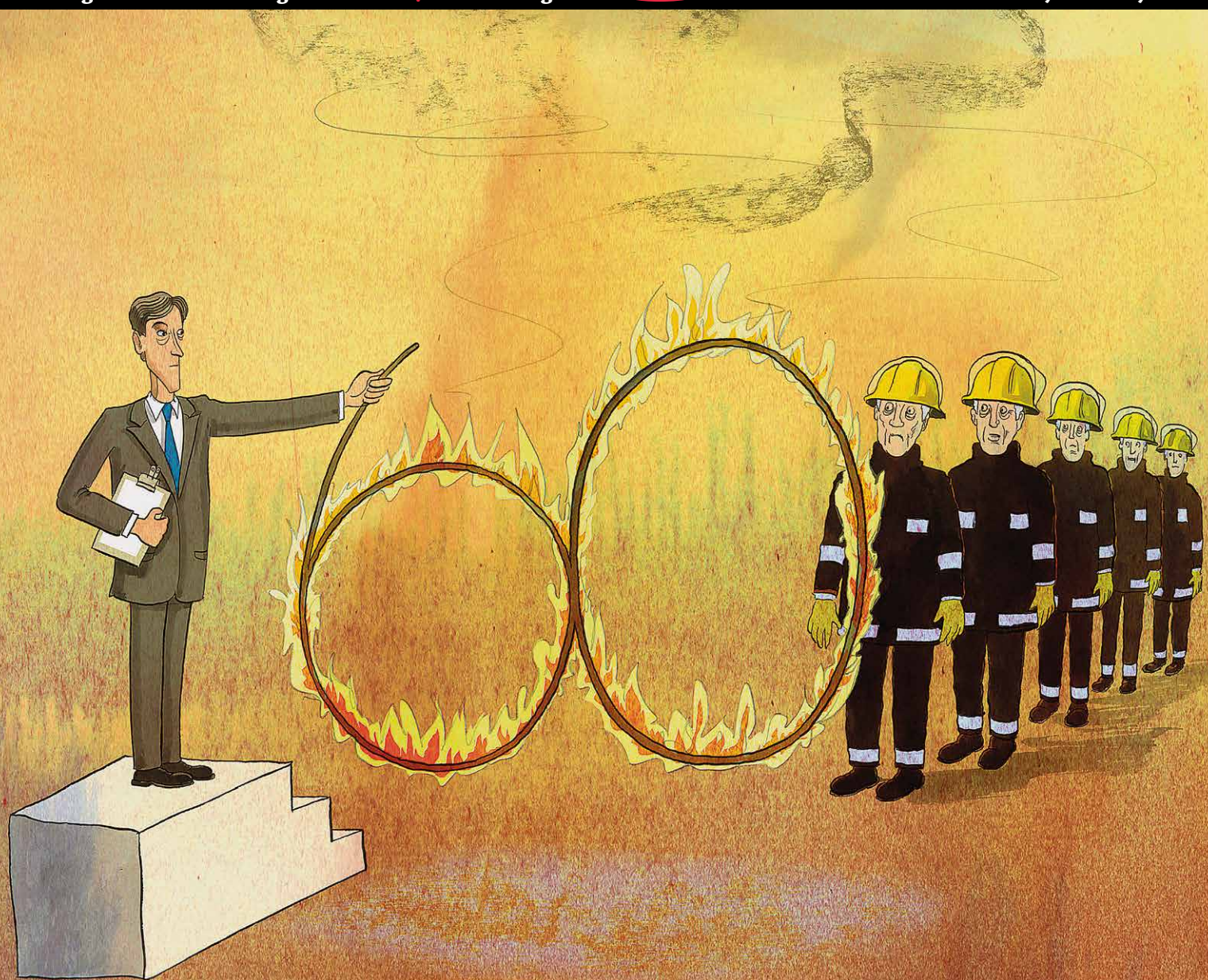


FireFighter

The magazine of the Fire Brigades Union ♦♦♦ www.fbu.org.uk

January/February 2013



FBU pensions campaign

TACKLING THE GOVERNMENT'S UNWORKABLE PROPOSALS

see p10





Matt Wrack

Time to get organised to be heard

Welcome to the first issue of *Firefighter* magazine for 2013. I hope all members had a decent break and the chance to enjoy the festivities over the Christmas period. Last year was a very tough time for firefighters and we can expect more of the same this year, especially on cuts, pensions and privatisation.

Cuts

The biggest challenge we face this year is tackling the Westminster government's cuts agenda. Two years ago it announced it was planning to cut central government funding to the fire and rescue service by 25%.

We have seen two years of cuts, with 1,500 firefighter jobs going in the first year. The Westminster government's autumn statement came out as this magazine went to press and there was no sign that ministers have done any rethinking.

The economy is bumping along the bottom and a "triple dip" is now a real possibility.

This Westminster government has siphoned off the prospects of economic recovery to please its friends in the banks and the credit agencies. It has failed even to reduce government borrowing and trim the national debt because it has choked off economic growth with spending cuts. Rather than invest in public services, the government has announced a further year of austerity

beyond the next election.

The FBU will continue with its campaign to defend the service and defend firefighter jobs. We need members to lobby their MPs and fire authorities/fire boards, to take action locally to protest to councillors passing on the cuts.

We need to raise our voice and make ourselves heard – for our own sake and for the communities we live in and serve.

Pensions

The FBU's campaign to defend firefighter pensions reaches a new stage this year. The Westminster government wants to impose a 1.3% increase in pension contributions for FPS members from April this year, despite overwhelming evidence from the union and independent research that this is unfair and will wreck the scheme.

The Westminster government's plans for a single firefighters' pension scheme from 2015 has also advanced. It is rushing on with legislation to make firefighters pay more, work longer and still get less.

The FBU's arguments and evidence have been heard loud and clear in the House of Commons. We will continue to press our case.

We expect the government to publish its review of the normal pension age.

Officials had no illusions when we submitted our evidence that ministers would listen – but we have been the only organisation actively defending firefighters during the process.

We expect the review to be used as a smokescreen by the government – but an objective look at the evidence shows that it is unreasonable to expect firefighters to work beyond 55.

Privatisation

Private, profit-seeking vultures are circling the fire and rescue service, just as they cast a greedy eye at the prospect of privatisation in the NHS, schools and other public services.

We face a titanic struggle to maintain our fire and rescue service as a publicly owned, democratically accountable public service in the face of attacks from outsourcing, mutuals and asset-strippers.

But as new TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady writes in this magazine, it is possible to win the argument.

Many councils that put out services are taking them back in-house after the waste of private involvement.

We have not faced the privateers' onslaught on our service yet, and we can do much to prevent them coming in and wrecking it.

We need to prepare our case and get our forces and allies ready.

All this requires effort. FBU officials are working tirelessly to support members, and we know many members have engaged with the union's activities at various levels.

We need to educate ourselves about the reality we face and then organise ourselves to win these battles.

A little bit of old-fashioned agitation will be needed in the coming year.

I urge members to take part actively in our union, to stand up for the service and for their livelihoods.



Matt Wrack talks to members at this year's FBU school

PAUL HERMANN

Contents

Privatisation, pensions and the fightback

Up, up and away –
paraglider
Martin Howes
in action



Spanish firefighters protest against cuts in front of Barcelona's city hall during a three-day general strike in the Catalan city

News

- 4** Seventy fire stations face closure
- 5** Remembering King's Cross
Floods reinforce need for investment
- 6** Posthumous award for Linda Shanahan
Marlie Farm: Justice delayed

Features

- 10 FBU's pensions fight**
Union continues to combat government attacks
- 14 Players not spectators**
Another successful FBU national school



Time to stop privatisation says TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady

Regulars

- 5 Sounding off**
End privatisation says TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady
- 7 Focus**
FBU standing up for control members as merger mania takes hold
- 8 Aerial ladder platform**
Europe united against austerity
- 16 Health**
The links between shiftwork and cancer
- 17 Legal Beagle**
Employers have an absolute duty to control exposure to hazards
- 18 Day off**
Meet paraglider Martin Howes
- 20 Puzzles**
Win £150-worth of Bonus Bonds
- 21 Station Cat**
The news they don't want you to hear
- 22 25-year badges**

A tribute to Colin Townsley

Station officer Colin Townsley died at the King's Cross fire 25 years ago. Martin Fittall, who attended the incident, pays tribute to our brother

Colin came to Soho from Chelsea (whites I think) who had called us to tell us he was a tyrant and unbreakable. I think they thought that we were as bad as the 'wicked whites' at Soho. But of course we were a gentle bunch. Anyway, I picked up on the rumours and matched them to some toys that were being advertised on TV at the time: "Tonka Toys they're unbreakable".

On the day he arrived, he found notices all round the station heralding the arrival of Tonka Townsley. I think he actually quite liked it.

Far from being a tyrant, I found a fair and approachable man who was one of the old school governors, fiercely loyal to his watch and expecting the same from them in return.

I discovered that he had asked for the posting to Soho, he considered it the pinnacle of his career and wanted to eventually retire from there. He told me: "There isn't another station in London with the excitement and charisma of this place."

Colin was "old school" and as such was always immaculately turned out. He used to have his No1 uniform tailored to fit. It was always brushed down before roll call and with shoes gleaming he would stroll around the station. Never a man to hurry, he would always have an air of calmness around him. This spread to the fire ground, where he was an unflappable focused leader respected by those working around him.

I can't remember ever hearing him raise his voice either. I think all in all he was just a pretty good guy and someone for whom I personally developed a great deal of respect after a rather rocky start.

Martin Fittall, retiree
A24 Soho red watch



Slashing spending means fire stations will close

Cuts

Nearly 70 fire stations in England are at risk of closure and scores more throughout the UK face severe downgrading if the Westminster government presses ahead with unprecedented spending cuts, the Fire Brigades Union has warned.

FBU research found that 69 fire stations in England are at risk of closure in the next two years if central government carries out planned cuts.

The worst hit brigades are in big cities, with 17 fire stations under threat in London, 11 in both West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire and 10 in both Greater Manchester and Merseyside. Station closures and mergers are also threatened in Berkshire, Hertfordshire, North Yorkshire, Kent and Dorset.

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said: "People need to realise that this government is now putting public safety at risk. People rely on having a fire station near where they live so that, in the event

of any emergency, professionally trained and well equipped firefighters will come to their aid.

"The cuts have now gone so far that dozens of fire stations are threatened with closure, an unprecedented development in the recent history of our fire service. We cannot just stand back and watch this essential service be systematically dismantled by savage spending cuts."

FBU officials have also reported that scores more fire stations face downgrading. This means that the fire station looks the same as it did before but, behind the facade, appliances are being removed, there are fewer firefighters riding on them, some

stations are only crewed during the day and then mini-vans are replacing properly equipped vehicles.

Looking further ahead, some fire authorities are planning to shut local fire stations and replace them with "super-stations" many miles from where people live.

Wrack said: "People need to understand that behind those big red doors, things are changing in their local fire station.

"Even where the lights remain on, there could be fewer firefighters, fewer appliances and less fire cover than the public expect.

"Firefighters have excelled again recently, in dealing with floods as well as fires and all manner of emergencies. That's what people expect from their fire and rescue service and firefighters are very proud to deliver an exceptional level of service.

"But this government is cutting the service to the point where lives are at risk. That cannot be right and we have to warn of the consequences before it is too late."

"This government is cutting the service to the point where lives are at risk. That cannot be right and we have to warn of the consequences before it is too late"

Frances O'Grady:
Unions
must build
momentum
against
privatisation



www.fbu.org.uk

Remember the dead and fight for the living

King's Cross

Firefighters joined rail workers and others on 18 November to remember the 1987 King's Cross fire in which 31 people, including station officer Colin Townsley, lost their lives.

FBU members joined RMT members to pay their respects on the 25th anniversary and to highlight current and ongoing safety concerns on the Tube network.

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack (*above*) said: "We stand to remember Brother Colin Townsley, the highly respected station officer who died trying

to rescue people at King's Cross. Our members have never forgotten the fire and what happened to our people.

"We will also fight to make sure that the safety improvements that followed from the King's Cross inquiry are maintained and built on."

Complacency

The Fennell inquiry into the King's Cross fire warned against any "complacency" with safety. It led to improvements in many areas, including fire safety, health and safety in the workplace and the banning of smoking on London



Underground premises.

FBU London official Sian Griffiths, who attended the original incident at King's Cross, said: "It is vital that we remember the lessons of King's Cross and the words of Desmond Fennell, OBE, QC. Station closures and job losses are short-sighted and dangerous.

"It is a recipe for disaster that cannot be reversed once implemented, and will only lead to death and destruction for many, including more firefighters like Colin Townsley."

SOUNDING OFF

We can turn the tide on outsourcing and privatisation, says TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady

Government policy is to increase outsourcing and privatisation. The prime minister has signalled his intention to dismantle the state "brick by brick" as outlined in the *Open Public Services* White Paper. Ministers have included the fire and rescue service in their plans.

At the same time, privatisation is becoming a dirty word with the public. No wonder, when it is a byword for rising costs, increased liabilities for taxpayers, concentration of the market in the hands of unaccountable corporations and, most important, a deterioration in service.

Fragmented

Outsourcing leads to fragmented services and downward pressure on job security and conditions leading to poor service quality.

When G4S's Olympic security failure leaves the public in the lurch while the company keeps hold of £57m, and when private equity firm Blackstone pockets £500m profit from the collapse of Southern Cross care homes, these feelings of distrust understandably turn into something more intense.

Unions and local activists have run successful anti-outsourcing campaigns such as the coalition that helped prevent the spin out of health services in Gloucester.

Dozens of local authorities across the UK have taken services back in-house, citing benefits like value for money, service quality, flexibility and integration with other services. The TUC and unions can help build this momentum.

First, by compiling an evidence base listing the benefits of public service delivery in terms of efficiency, innovation, value for money, flexibility and service quality.

Second, by working with local people, community groups and the voluntary sector to pressure politicians at local and national level to challenge the *Open Public Services* agenda for what it is – a massive drive to privatisation, no matter how it is dressed up.

MPs must wake up to effect of cuts

Floods

After the extraordinary dedication of fire crews who worked around the clock for days to deal with floods in the South West, the FBU has told politicians that the union now expects investment in the service and the threat of frontline cuts to be removed.

Fire crews from Devon and Somerset answered 1,357 emergency calls and rescued 218 people in five days.

The FBU believes that the government should make tackling floods a statutory duty of the fire and rescue service to bring clarity and resources.

Tam McFarlane, South West FBU executive council member, said: "The professionalism and commitment shown by members of the fire and rescue service during these devastating floods was there for all to see.

"Crews worked around the clock and in the most difficult of circumstances to serve the public and their communities. But it should be obvious to everyone that



Firefighters tackle Somerset flooding

we are working to the limit and, in some cases, beyond.

"Large-scale floods are becoming a regular feature of the work that we do and every region should have the necessary equipment and frontline firefighting staff needed to deal with it effectively. This requires further investment and we have asked our MPs to raise these points with the government as a matter of urgency."

Unions welcome award for Linda Shanahan

Safety

The Fire Brigades Union and the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) have welcomed the Suzy Lamplugh Trust's recognition of the work of the late Linda Shanahan in combating workplace violence with a special award.

Linda died in September 2011 after a courageous battle with cancer. She was a long standing activist and official in the FBU, a former member of the STUC general council and former chair of the STUC women's committee.

She always appreciated the support and encouragement she received from the trust, which was set up by the parents of Suzy Lamplugh, a 25-year-old estate agent who disappeared in 1986 after she went to meet a client.

STUC general secretary Grahame Smith said the unions were delighted that Linda's work had been recognised.

She was seconded to the Scottish



TREVOR MARTIN

Linda Shanahan: Held in high regard by government and unions alike

government in 2004 for 12 weeks, which turned out to be five years, said Grahame Smith. "This was a mark of regard that both the STUC and the Scottish government had for the work that Linda undertook bringing unions and employers together to tackle the challenge that workers providing services to the public face as a result of verbal and physical abuse.

"Linda is sadly missed, first and foremost by her family, but also her colleagues in the trade union movement and the Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives."



Marlie Farm justice delayed

Safety

Six years after firefighters Geoff Wicker and Brian Wembridge were killed at Marlie Farm, the relatives of the deceased and the injured firefighters are still fighting for compensation.

Two firefighters were killed and a further nine firefighters were injured at an explosion at Marlie Farm (above) on 3 December 2006.

Six years on, the families and firefighters affected have still not received compensation.

Legal costs for all parties involved have already run into millions of pounds.

Jim Parrott, FBU executive council member for the South-East, who attended the incident, said on the anniversary: "Six years ago, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) sent their personnel to an emergency at Marlie Farm. An hour later two people were dead and others were injured.

"I believe that East Sussex Fire Authority's planning for any type of emergency at Marlie Farm

was woefully inadequate. This meant that ESFRS's initial response was too small and poorly resourced."

He said ESFRS had not educated its personnel to understand the risks of explosives incidents or even to appreciate that fireworks are explosives. It had not practised the basic firefighting skills necessary to protect firefighters and the public.

"Six years on the relatives of the deceased and the injured continue to pay the price of the authority's failings."

IN BRIEF

Fairer commutation

The latest bulletin from the Pensions Ombudsman relating to the FBU's fairer commutation campaign confirms advice that there is no need for members to take further action at this time.

The judicial review instigated by the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) was heard in June 2012 and the judge ruled that GAD is within the court's jurisdiction in relation to a complaint made by a firefighter about commutation factors.

GAD sought permission to appeal on 31 October 2012, but was refused. It has now applied to the Court of Appeal to appeal.

FBU national officer for pensions Sean Starbuck said: "The union cannot say how long these court proceedings will take. In the meantime we will not be proceeding with the firefighter's case. There is still no need for members of police or firefighters' schemes to take any further action."

More information: www.fbu.org.uk

Time for bank takeover

The FBU has made the case for a publicly owned finance industry in a pamphlet, *It's time to take over the banks*, contributing to the debate on the economy.

The initiative arises out of a motion on the issue which the FBU moved successfully at the 2012 Trades Union Congress. This was the first time that such a motion has been carried at the TUC.

Taking over the banks would enable planning, investment and the creation of millions of jobs. A publicly owned and democratically accountable banking system is essential to developing such a programme.

The union hopes it will be debated by other unions and workers discussing the case for an alternative to the policies of the coalition government.

The pamphlet can be downloaded from the FBU's website www.fbu.org.uk



NATIONAL LESBIAN GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANS SCHOOL

8-10 February 2013 Wortley Hall, Sheffield



APPLICATION FORMS CAN BE OBTAINED FROM
ganndubois785@hotmail.com • 07824 319545
and www.fbu.org.uk • www.fbulgbt.org.uk

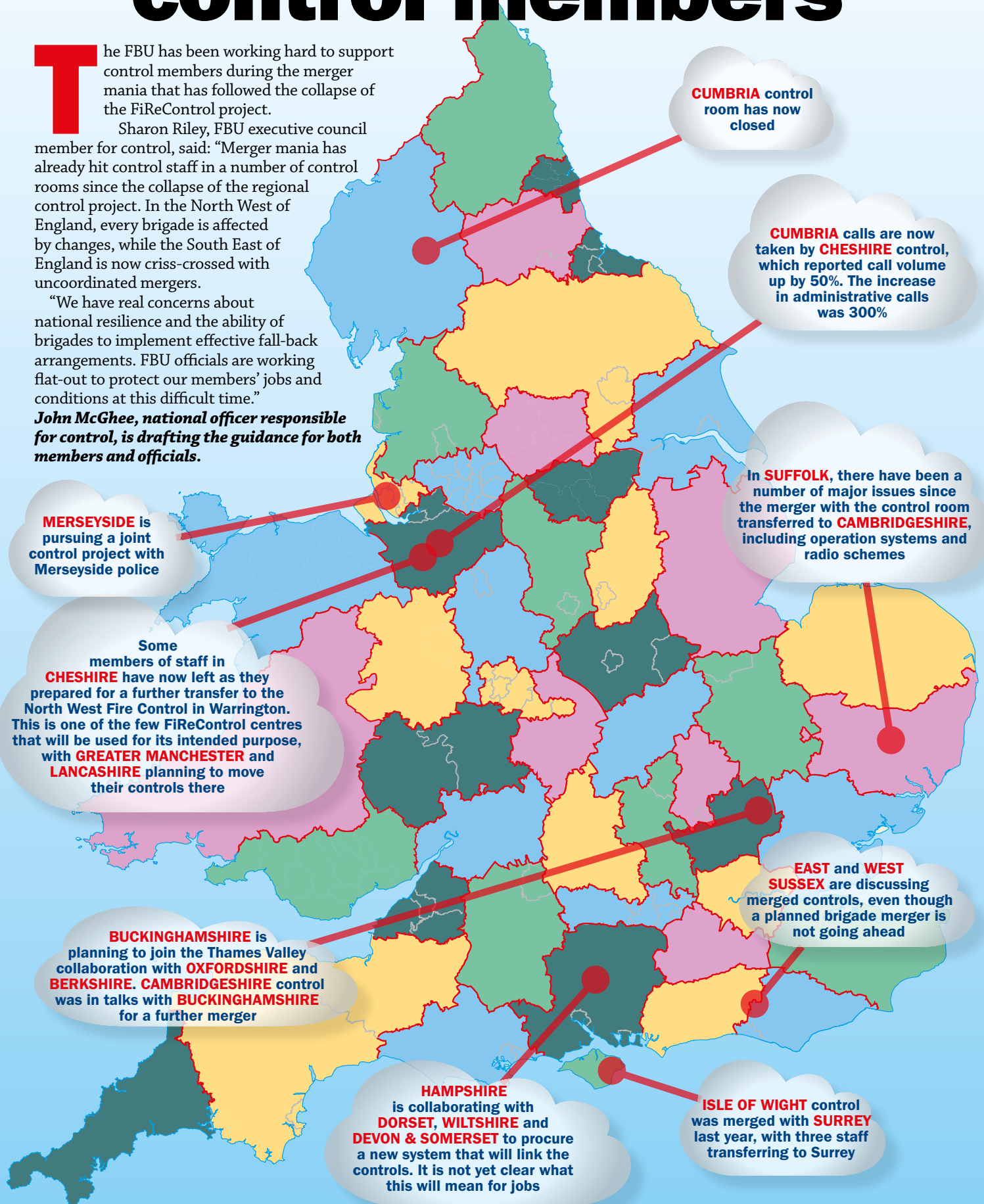
Standing up for control members

The FBU has been working hard to support control members during the merger mania that has followed the collapse of the FiReControl project.

Sharon Riley, FBU executive council member for control, said: "Merger mania has already hit control staff in a number of control rooms since the collapse of the regional control project. In the North West of England, every brigade is affected by changes, while the South East of England is now criss-crossed with uncoordinated mergers.

"We have real concerns about national resilience and the ability of brigades to implement effective fall-back arrangements. FBU officials are working flat-out to protect our members' jobs and conditions at this difficult time."

John McGhee, national officer responsible for control, is drafting the guidance for both members and officials.





Spanish firefighters protest against cuts in front of Barcelona's city hall during a three-day general strike in the Catalan city

GUILLAUME DARRIBAU/
INVISION IMAGES/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

Europe united against austerity

Hundreds of thousands of workers demonstrated across Europe on 14 November against the brutality of austerity measures, in what was the largest-ever coordinated cross-European mobilisation by trade unions.

Some 50 trade union organisations from 28 countries participated actively in this day of action, which was backed by

the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). The aim of the European day of action and solidarity was to call on European governments to get to grips with the deterioration in employment conditions and to respond to the growing crisis in Europe.

The day of action on 14 November took various forms. There were strikes in Spain,

Portugal, Greece and Italy. For the first time in its history, a European trade union day of action included simultaneous strikes in four countries.

Demonstrations were also held in France, Belgium and in some Eastern European countries such as Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Romania.

Firefighters were involved in many of the



VIEW
FROM THE
AERIAL LADDER
PLATFORM

mobilisations on 14 November. European firefighters have been involved in other big strikes in recent months.

Around 1,000 Portuguese firefighters protested in Lisbon against austerity measures being imposed by the government and in defence of their pay and conditions. Greek firefighters took part in two general strikes during

November, while firefighters joined a general strike in Barcelona in October.

European trade unions argue that austerity is a total dead end, and must be abandoned.

Social protection and wages can no longer be sacrificed. This is a social emergency and it is time to listen to what the citizens and workers have to say, and

to change course.

Bernadette Ségol, ETUC general secretary commented: "Europe's leaders should recognise the full magnitude of the European mobilisation. It is impossible to pursue the path of austerity, which is a total failure. We need to change course immediately. The social situation is urgent."

Contesting unreasonable expectations

FBU officials have been defending firefighter pensions from government attacks

Fire Brigades Union officials have been busy defending firefighters' pensions in recent months. Last year, due to the union's efforts, the government agreed to review the normal pension age (NPA) that firefighters would be expected to work to before receiving a full pension.

The review, which looks at the appropriateness of the proposed NPA, is expected to be available early this year.

Firefighters are the only group of workers given an NPA review of this nature. Other unions, including those that took strike action in 2011, were unable to force the government to move on its plans, which are for the NPA to come into line with the state pension age. This will mean other public sector workers (including our control members) working until they are 66, 67 and 68 before receiving their full pension. The Public Service Pension Bill, to put this into effect, is currently going through the Westminster parliament.

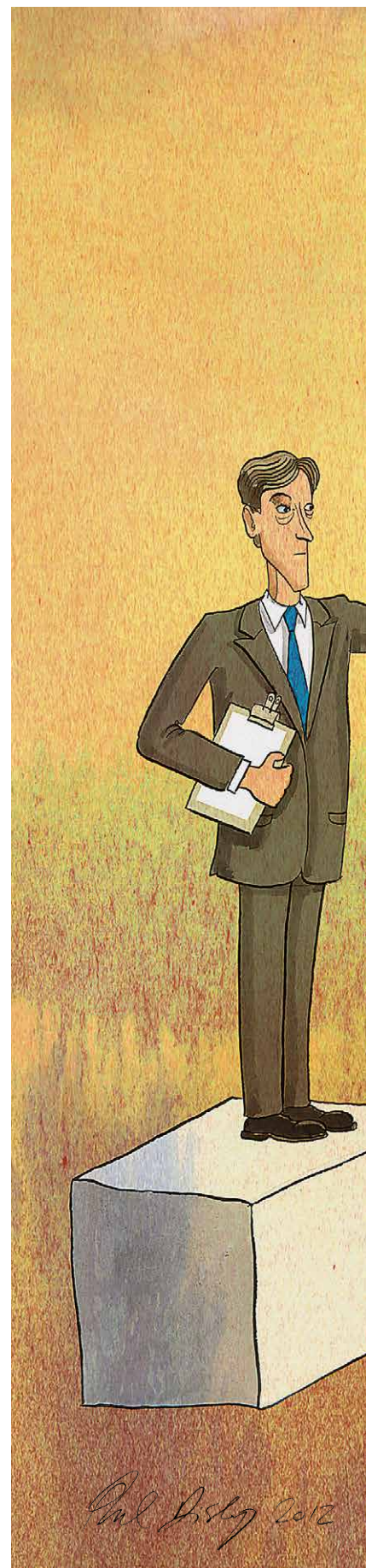
Sean Starbuck, FBU national officer with responsibility for pensions, said:

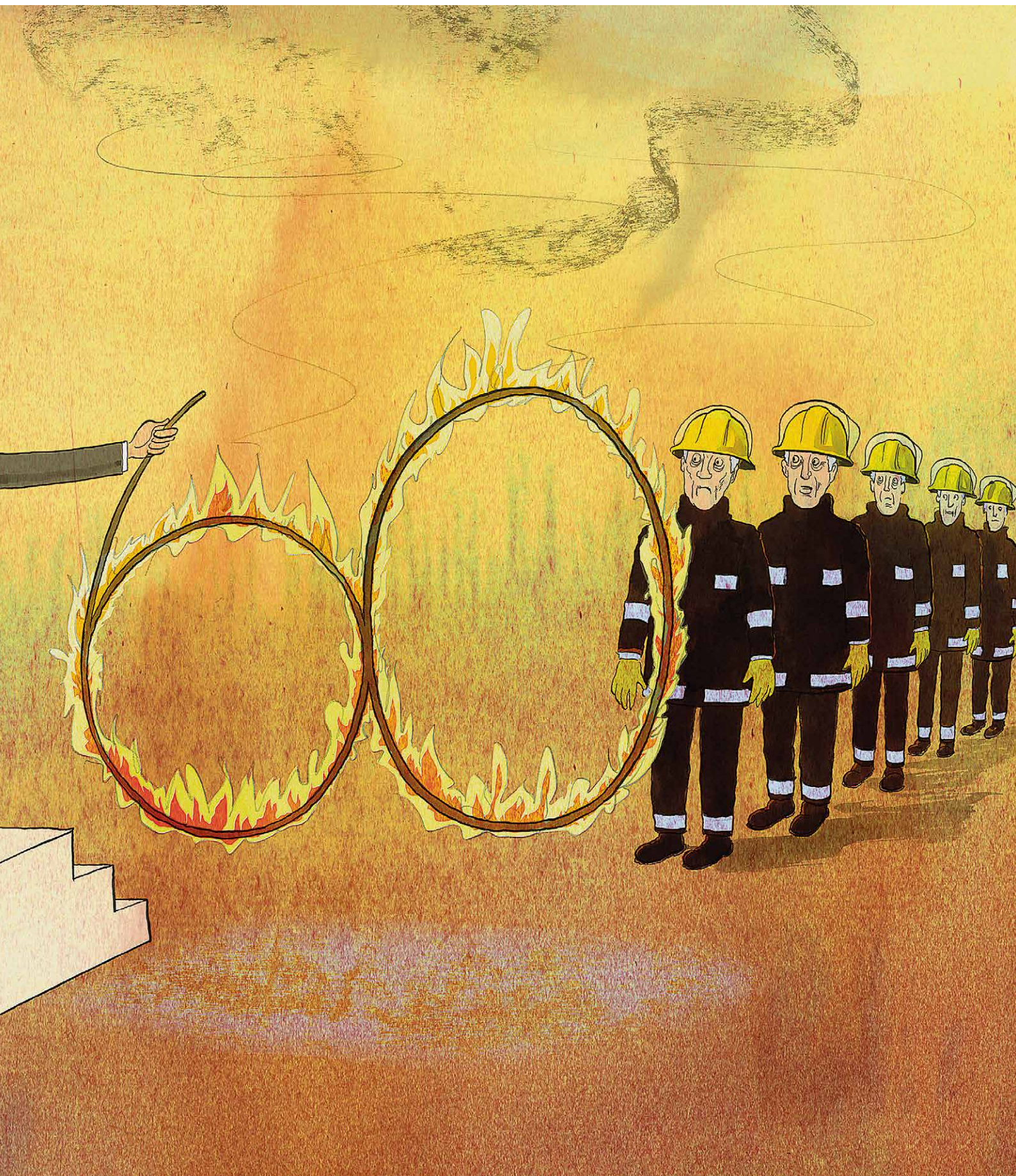
"Our officials have been working very hard on the NPA review. We've been the only organisation that gathered new evidence of this nature and have been arguing vociferously with academics and civil servants that firefighters cannot physically work beyond 55 in any real numbers. We believe we have made a very strong, evidence-based case."

Review process

The government's proposals for a new firefighters' pension scheme from 2015 include an NPA of 60 (Written ministerial statement: Fire and Rescue Service, 24 May 2012). The current NPA for firefighters in the Firefighters Pensions Scheme (FPS) is 55, while those in the New Firefighters Pension Scheme (NFPS) already have an NPA of 60.

The FBU has argued that an NPA of 55 is appropriate for all firefighters, including those in the NFPS. Firefighting is an arduous job and few firefighters can maintain operational fitness into their fifties. Few firefighters (only 2%) currently work beyond 55. And there are few alternatives without an operational





requirement in the service for older firefighters unable to work longer.

One important job FBU officials have done is to demolish the arguments used for an NPA of 60 when the NFPS was imposed in 2006.

At the time, the government made assurances that sufficient non-operational roles would be available. It stated that "greater emphasis on fire safety will create a wider range of job opportunities where some experience of firefighting and other emergency work will be beneficial" (Government Proposals for a New Firefighters' Pension Scheme, 21 September 2005).

Redeployments

The FBU surveyed every fire and rescue service in the UK to enquire what opportunities it had for redeploying firefighters deemed unfit for operational duty on ill-health grounds.

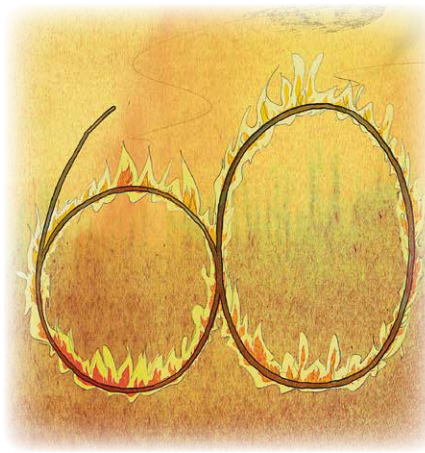
In England, only five of the 46 fire and rescue services confirmed that they had any redeployment opportunities. The total number of redeployments presently available for England is 16 posts. In Scotland, only Strathclyde had any redeployment opportunities, while only Mid and West Wales had a few alternative roles in that country. No redeployments are available in Northern Ireland.

With no prospect of alternative employment on Grey Book conditions for older firefighters, the rationale for 60 used by the last government is exposed as illogical.

Occupational pension

The FBU has defended firefighters' pensions by concentrating on the occupational demands of the job. Firefighters have a unique occupational pension in keeping with the special status of the job, which is widely recognised as presenting the most challenging non-military vocational experiences.

Firefighting, particularly wearing breathing apparatus to tackle compartment, high-rise and other fires, is highly demanding. It requires sustained effort for long periods, in highly hazardous and varied environments as well as high-intensity intervention in BA. The arduous nature of the job has been thoroughly examined and many



The total number of redeployments presently available for England is 16 posts

government reports contain testimony as to the taxing character of the work.

The expectation in the UK fire and rescue service, whatever the role or duty system, is that firefighters are capable of intervening for as long as we are employed. Firefighters accept the challenge; however it must mean having a pension scheme commensurate to the nature of the job.

Fitness

Given the demands of the job, another key consideration is whether firefighters can maintain the levels of fitness necessary for their own safety, the safety of other firefighters and for public safety.

The FBU argued that an NPA greater than 55 makes unreasonable fitness demands on most individuals and increases the risk of ill-health and injury for the older firefighters, as well as for others present at emergencies.

Fitness declines with age for well understood physiological reasons. Fat mass increases with age, while muscle mass may be lost during aging. Skeletal muscle also changes, as do tendon properties.

Firefighting is a particularly demanding job because it requires a combination aerobic fitness (endurance or the ability to sustain work for prolonged periods), anaerobic fitness (ability to function at a high intensity for short periods) and strength (such as grip and lifting).

Aerobic power

Maximal oxygen uptake or maximal aerobic power (VO₂ max) is the indicator of aerobic fitness. VO₂ max is determined by the measurement of oxygen uptake during the performance of maximal work.

Studies of individuals over many decades have shown a decline in peak VO₂ with age and that this decline accelerates for older individuals of both sexes.

Although the decline can be attenuated by regular physical exercise, levels of aerobic power cannot be maintained at the same level into a person's forties and fifties.

Firefighters know this from the careers of elite sportspeople – even these athletes lose performance despite heavy training regimes as they age.

Many fire and rescue services now operate a fitness VO2 max standard of 42 ml.kg-1.min-1, which represents a moderate, average level of fitness for someone in their early twenties. A man would expect some loss of fitness during his career, but still be able to make the NPA of 55. However he would fall below the widely used minimum standard of 35 ml.kg-1.min-1 if expected to work beyond 55. FBU officials are already dealing with cases where firefighters are being taken off the run for not meeting fitness standards.

Driving out professionals

These standards are more difficult for women firefighters to achieve, but still possible. Pushing up the NPA beyond 55 would also make retaining women firefighters to the end of their career far harder.

The imposition of inappropriate and unrealistic fitness standards designed to make all firefighters work longer is also likely to drive large numbers of highly effective professionals, especially women operational firefighters, out of their jobs.

The FBU asked Richard Graveling from the Institute of Occupational Medicine (IOM) to examine the implications of imposing the 42/35 ml kg-1 min-1 VO2max standard.

He calculated that "by the age of 40 years, approximately 65% of firefighters would be estimated as having a predicted maximum oxygen uptake (aerobic capacity) of 42ml kg-1 min-1, with approximately 20% already failing to attain the lower criterion of 35ml kg-1 min-1".

By the age of 50 years "those values have risen to 86% failing to attain the higher criterion, with almost half (47%) not reaching the lower value".

Increasing the NPA above 55 would mean more than half of all firefighters – even those who exercise regularly, don't smoke and have a low BMI – would not meet the fitness standard.

Sean Starbuck said: "There is no definitive medical evidence that the majority of firefighters in the UK can continue to perform beyond 55.

"In fact all the major studies by the UK government in the last two decades have concluded that the NPA of 55 is appropriate."

Even an Olympic fitness regime would not yield the kind of improvements necessary

Costs of ill-health

Forcing firefighters to work beyond 55 will have consequences for their ability to carry out their job and their resulting risk of injury.

It will also increase the risk to colleagues and members of the public, whose safety might depend on the performance of other team members.

To cost this, the FBU asked First Actuarial consultants to provide an assessment of the potential impact of any rise in ill-health retirements on the existing pension schemes.

First Actuarial found that ill-health retirements dramatically increase with age.

The assumption for ill-health retirements uses the Treasury's own valuation figure of 5%. An increase in ill-health retirement by between 10% and 15% would nullify any savings that might be delivered by increasing the NPA from 55 to 60.

An increase by 20% would actually make the proposal to increase the NPA from 55 to 60 more expensive than the current scheme arrangements. The conclusions are broadly similar for both the FPS and the NFPS.

The FBU believes that, alongside the risk of increased ill-health retirements (medical discharges), there is a risk that draconian fitness policies allied to a higher NPA would significantly increase the number of firefighters dismissed on capability grounds. Sacking firefighters is no basis on which to design a new pension scheme.

Sean Starbuck said: "There are no guarantees that even an Olympic fitness regime would yield the kind of improvements necessary to ensure firefighters are fit for operational duty into their late fifties.

"Forcing firefighters to work beyond 55 is gambling with the future of an irreplaceable public service.

"There is no case for increasing the current NPA for members of the FPS; indeed there is a strong case for reducing the NPA of NFPS members.

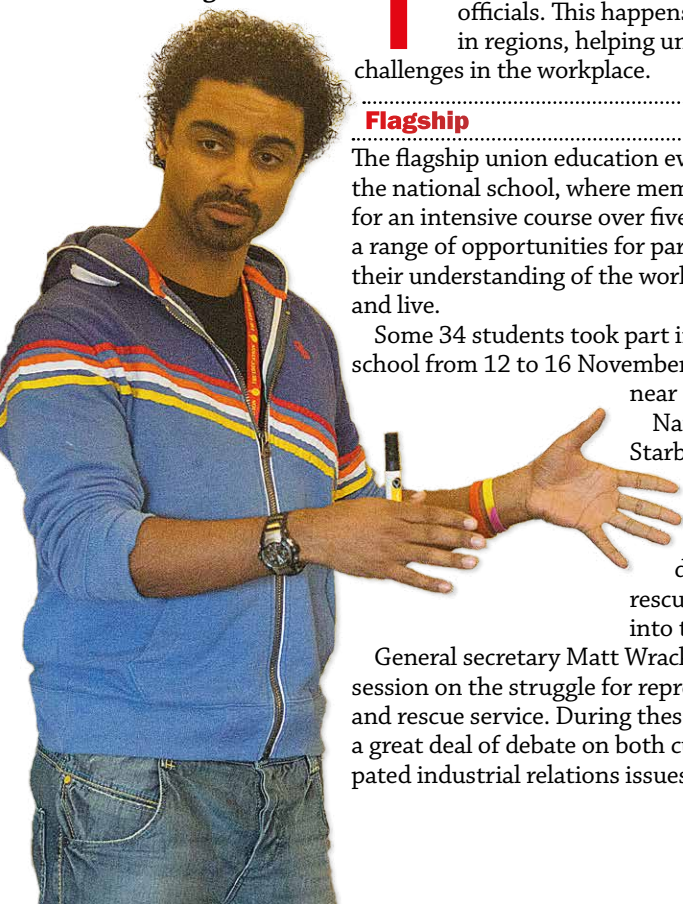
"If the government is committed to designing a workable occupational pension scheme for firefighters, it will listen to the voice of professionals within the fire and rescue service."



“Discover how to become a player and not just a spectator in your own life”

Trevor Cave, FBU director of education, reports on a successful national school

Cameron Matthews, Cambridgeshire



The Fire Brigades Union has a proud record of providing relevant education and training for its active members and officials. This happens both nationally and in regions, helping union reps to deal with challenges in the workplace.

Flagship

The flagship union education event of the year is the national school, where members come together for an intensive course over five days. This provides a range of opportunities for participants to deepen their understanding of the world in which we work and live.

Some 34 students took part in the 2012 national school from 12 to 16 November at Wortley Hall near Sheffield.

National officer Sean Starbuck opened the school. It was, he said, “intended to help us continue to defend our fire and rescue service now and into the future”.

General secretary Matt Wrack led the opening session on the struggle for representation in the fire and rescue service. During these sessions there was a great deal of debate on both current and anticipated industrial relations issues, including facing

the consequences of actual or threatened future cuts in public sector funding.

Economics

The theme for the second day was an introduction to economics for trade unionists. Sessions were designed to help participants understand why studying the economy is relevant for union members at any time, but especially when we are faced with the claim that “there is no alternative” to massive cuts in public sector services, including fire and rescue.

Students had a chance to look at our economic, social and trade union history and discuss its relevance today. The first year groups visited the National Coal Mining Museum for England at Caphouse Colliery and the Huskar Pit disaster memorial. The second year group visited the Wilberforce House Museum in Hull.

The whole school heard a presentation given by the director of the After Slavery Project, Brian Kelly from Queen’s University Belfast, who focused on the actual links between the struggles of slaves for self-emancipation and of working people for fundamental rights and freedom in the same period.

Range of speakers

Guest speakers at the school included Janet Alder from the Christopher Alder Campaign, who spoke with emotion about a case that has become a cause celebre for civil rights campaigners in the UK. Tosh



JANE GUMMERY, WEST MIDLANDS

"I hadn't realised how much I would learn. Education is such an important part of any union, and whether it is national school or branch rep school, it is equally important our members and reps are properly informed and educated."

"National school was an eye opener, it made me realise what others are going through, see a wider picture, nationally in the union and in the country. That we can make a difference and there is another way to get things done. The opportunity to network is invaluable. I would recommend everyone who is an official in any capacity to attend and see, it's a real revelation."

CAMERON MATTHEWS, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

"It's a fantastic opportunity to learn about and discuss the wider debates we often have around the mess table or with family and friends. About our union, the future of the service, the banks, austerity, society, the past, the future and the alternatives. Classes and sessions are led by external experts in the fields and higher education tutors. It may appear daunting at first, but it's set at a comfortable and accessible pace, giving you the skills and knowledge to effectively form your own perspective and abilities."

"Discover in yourself how to become a player and not just a spectator in your own life."



FBU officials at national school



McDonald, vice-president of the train drivers' union ASLEF, put forward a powerful case for rebuilding the railways and the joint union case for renationalisation. He drew attention to the union's experience of rail privatisation and strategies they had developed in response to that threat.

An exhibition "Antifascistas" about British and Irish volunteers in the Spanish Civil War was hosted by the union at Wortley for the week.

An especially lively session, "The banks: Is it time to take them over?" was introduced by guest speakers Michael Roberts and Mick Brooks. They put the case for public ownership of the banks to ensure the necessary resources are available for quality public services.

The final day of a very intensive school was led by Matt Wrack on challenges facing the FBU and the wider trade union and labour movement.

In written evaluations, participants scored the school as "extremely successful".

Jamie Newell from Bedfordshire said: "National school this year focused heavily on economics, a subject most around a mess table would consider dry. The school made the subject easily accessible for all to understand and decoded the myths behind the statements made by the likes of Mervyn King and George Osborne."



PAUL HERRMANN

❖❖❖ Key courses in the national programme for 2013 are available at www.fbu.org.uk

CANCER

We must all be aware of the risks

The International Agency for Research on Cancer rates shiftwork as a 'probable' cause of cancer

Shiftwork and breast cancer

Shiftwork and work at night have been linked to a wide range of health problems, including breast and prostate cancer, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, heightened accident risk, heart disease and pregnancy problems.

Occupational health researchers say working antisocial hours and the potential disruption of rotating through different shift patterns may cause stress which, in turn, leaves people vulnerable to health problems.

Shift workers

Most firefighters cannot avoid working shifts. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the government safety watchdog, estimates that 3.5 million people in the UK work shifts. Official figures suggest around two million women usually or sometimes do shiftwork, with about 400,000 involved in night work.

Shiftwork and night work affect the body's "natural" circadian rhythms. These rhythms may affect sleep, hunger, activity and hormones. Disruptions may have direct and indirect effects on the worker.

There is evidence that some workers may be less severely affected than others by different shift patterns – so there may be a degree of selection occurring among shift workers, where those who "adjust" to a particular shift pattern continue to work those

shifts, while those who do not adjust drop out.

On cancer, scientists believe spending the night in artificial light suppresses the body's production of a hormone called melatonin. Low levels of melatonin may stimulate the growth of cancerous cells in the breast, or encourage the production of the female sex hormone oestrogen, which is known to promote breast cancer.

Breast cancer

A 2010 HSE report, *The burden of occupational cancer in Great Britain*, estimated that 552 breast cancer deaths and 1,957 cases were linked to shiftwork annually. In total, more than 8,000 cancer deaths a year were attributed to employment by the research.

The connection between work (especially shiftwork) and breast cancer has been known for some time, but the union safety campaign Hazards argues that a lack of adequate studies has hampered early recognition of the problem and has meant preventive action has been lacking.

In 2007, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), an arm of the World Health Organisation, rated shiftwork as a "probable" cause of cancer. IARC's expert working group, which comprised 24 experts from 10 countries, concluded: "Shiftwork that involves circadian disruption is probably carcinogenic to humans."

In 2008, a Danish occupational physician's review of the

evidence concluded that there was limited evidence – meaning some evidence, but not yet conclusive – for a causal association between night shiftwork and breast cancer, while there was insufficient evidence for prostate cancer, colon cancer and overall cancer.

As a result of this review, almost 40 air cabin crew, nurses and soldiers received payouts from the Danish government.

What can be done?

Paul Woolstenholmes, FBU national officer responsible for health and safety, said all FBU members should be aware of the risks. "Whether we are wholetime or retained, on the pumps or in control, as shift workers, we should be aware of these issues," he said. "There are things that can be done to reduce the risk if workers have to work shifts at night. There are ways of reducing the impact.

"These include ensuring staff do not work excessive hours, have access to nutritious food and take appropriate breaks.

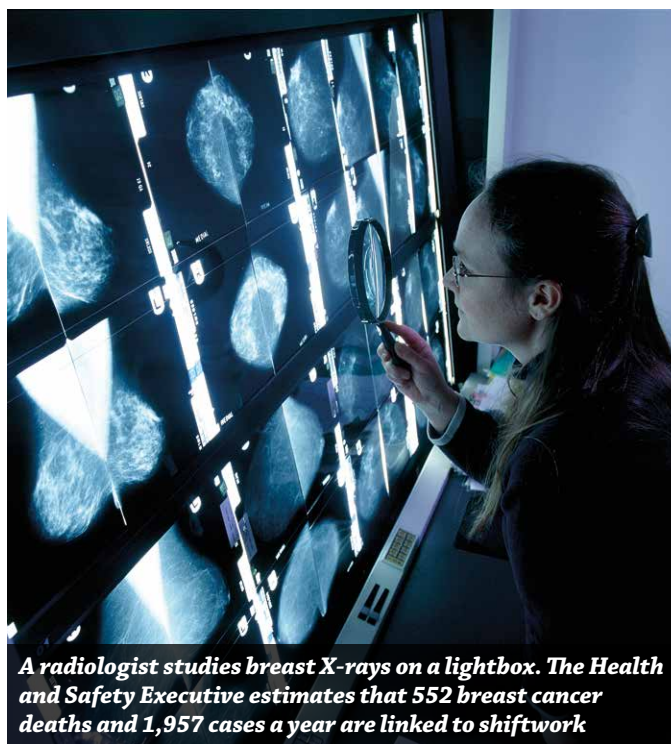
"It is the employer's responsibility to improve those things and reduce the risk. But we know they will not take these steps unless we campaign for them."

More information

While you were sleeping, *Hazards* magazine, summer 2009

www.hazards.org/hours/shiftwork

The burden of occupational cancer in Great Britain, research report 800, HSE, 2010
www.hse.gov.uk/research/rpdp/rr800.pdf



A radiologist studies breast X-rays on a lightbox. The Health and Safety Executive estimates that 552 breast cancer deaths and 1,957 cases a year are linked to shiftwork

JAMES KING-HOLMES/SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY

Legal Beagle

Absolute duty to prevent exposure

FBU
FREEPHONE
LEGAL ADVICE
LINE
0808
100 6061

Q Is a brigade responsible for ensuring that firefighters wear dust masks even if individual firefighters choose not to put them on?

A The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) regulations impose an absolute duty on employers to prevent or control exposure.

This means that they cannot leave it to the judgement of individuals. Although employees are also required under health and safety regulations to make proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE), this does not take away an employer's duty.

Regulation 8 of COSHH states that employers must ensure that PPE (such as a dust mask) is used.

Q I have read that the government plans to put a cap on compensation awards for unfair dismissal. What does this mean?

A There is already a limit on how much a tribunal can award someone who has been unfairly dismissed. The government wants to make it more restrictive.

Details are not yet available, but it appears that awards will be capped at either one year's

pay, or between one and three year's national annual median earnings (currently £26,000), whichever is the lower.

If the government goes for a one-year cap at £26,000, then someone paid more than that will have their compensation capped at that. Such a move ignores any pension loss, which can often be very

significant, and penalises the long-term unemployed and those earning above £26,000.

The government's reasoning is that the current maximum (£72,000) deters employers from hiring staff. Yet latest official employment tribunal statistics show that the median award for unfair dismissal cases is just £4,560.



SATOSHI KAMBAYASHI

Q Can firefighters still apply to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority for compensation if they are injured in the course of their duties as a result of a crime of violence? I have read that the government is changing the scheme.

A Yes they can, but the government has stopped compensation for many types of injury, and cut it for many others. The new Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme came into force in November (see *Firefighter* March 2012). Lower band tariffs have been removed completely, meaning no compensation will be paid for injuries previously valued at between £1,000 and £2,000.

These include partial deafness, temporary anxiety, dental injuries and some fractures. The middle bands, for injuries in the tariffs up to £11,000 which include moderate burns and scarring to limbs, have been cut by about half.

There are also a number of new rules that change eligibility criteria, including a requirement to report the incident that resulted in injury to the police. Previously it was enough for members injured in the course of their duty as a result of a crime of violence to report it to their employer.

Members who believe that they may have a CICA claim should contact their FBU rep for advice.

'Soaring effortlessly over fields and hills'

Martin Howes from Buckinghamshire swapped rubber and petrol for nylon and air



Paragliding

There's nothing quite like taking to the skies, riding the wind and being up there with the birds. Ask Martin Howes, blue watch manager at Buckingham fire station. He took up paragliding less than a year ago, but the former motocross competition racer reckons he has found the bracing sporty pastime that will see him through to retirement and beyond.

Martin was inspired to take up the sport

when he came across footage of paragliders soaring effortlessly over fields and hills, when surfing the net last year. "That was it," says Martin, 48. "I knew I wanted to do that. I'd always loved the idea of flying – my late father used to fly gliders and light aircraft and I went up with him sometimes. I never wanted to fly a plane myself, but paragliding seemed just right."

So he fixed up tuition with skilled paraglider Steve Purdy at Airworks in East Sussex and the sessions didn't disappoint.

"The first time you go up, it's just amazing," says Martin, who has progressed from an elementary to a club paragliding pilot licence since he first learned to inflate his "wing" – a cigar-shaped parachute – by laying it on its side and letting the wind fill it.

For the first few times, those new to the sport go up in the air for 30 seconds or so after a "small hop" from near the bottom of a hill, building confidence, learning the ropes.

Read the clouds

Taking, off, landing, "spot" landing – choosing where you want to land and using body weight to steer – were all covered, and, crucially, learning to read the clouds and predict weather conditions.

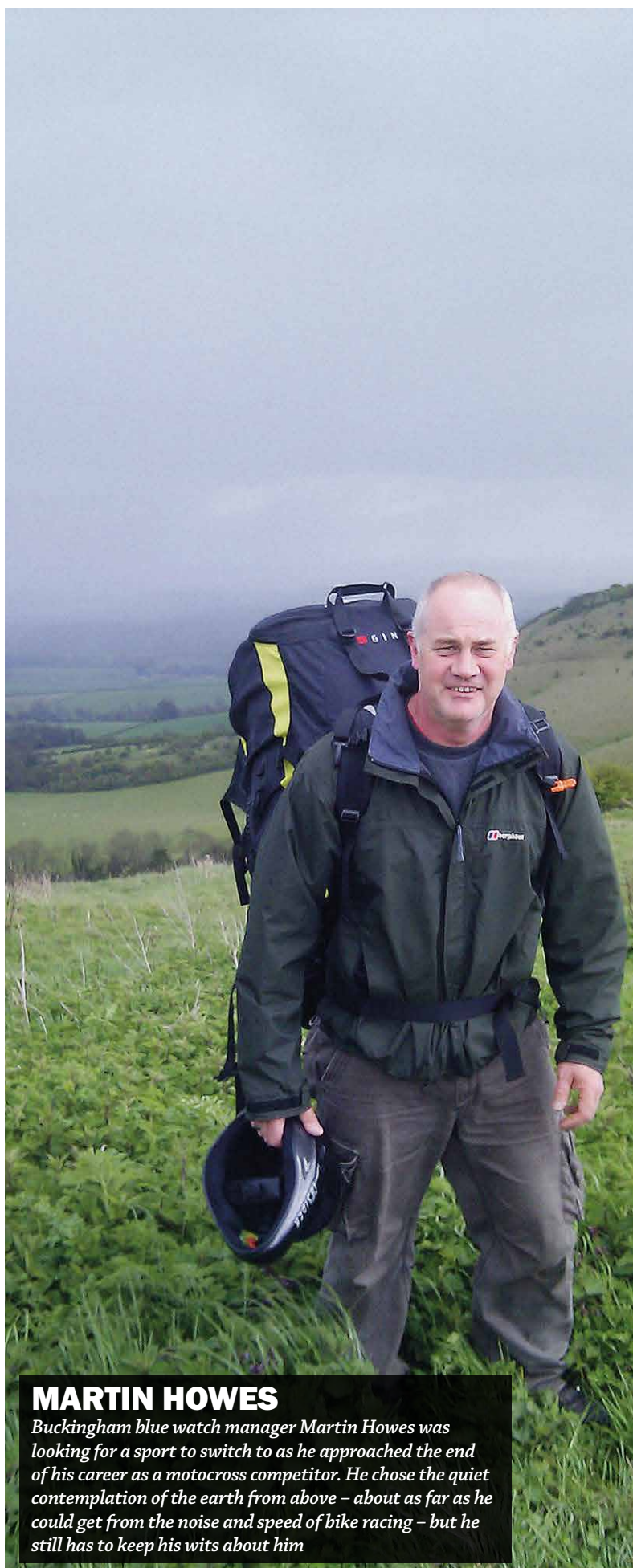
"It's all about riding the wind and reading the weather," says Martin. And "thermals" – columns of warm air that, though invisible to the naked eye, can be spotted by a trained observer and used to ride the skies.

Martin, now a member of Dunstable Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club, explains how it works: "If you are planning to glide across country, you will rise with the curve of air if you get into a thermal. You can fly through a thermal and feel the



Martin in the air and (right) after a great day's flying at Ditchling Beacon in Sussex.

The wing (left) is inflated by laying it on its side and letting the wind fill it up



MARTIN HOWES

Buckingham blue watch manager Martin Howes was looking for a sport to switch to as he approached the end of his career as a motocross competitor. He chose the quiet contemplation of the earth from above – about as far as he could get from the noise and speed of bike racing – but he still has to keep his wits about him

uplift. You don't always know until you hit it, but you can judge where a thermal might possibly be by looking at cloud formations, other paragliders and how birds are behaving. If birds are circling, not flapping their wings but gaining height, they are in a thermal."

Getting into a thermal can be quite exhilarating – and experienced paragliders can travel many miles across country. Thermals can also be extremely strong – particularly in summer. "My longest journey so far has lasted 40 minutes, but I hope to take more qualifications this year, stay up for longer and travel further," says Martin. "The experience is quite astonishing. You are up there flying with the birds and get a birds-eye view of the world. Being up in the clouds puts things in perspective. But you have to stay alert."

Two hours to cut himself out

It's not always been plain sailing. "I have fallen out of the sky", Martin confides. He was soaring above the Dunstable slopes on what looked like a perfect day. Then he hit a "sink". This is where a thermal column of air cools. So, instead of taking the paraglider upwards, the cool air prompts it to plunge. Rather rapidly.

"It was as if someone was holding a puppet by the string and the string was cut," Martin recalls.

He landed in trees, brambles and bushes – and it took him two hours to cut himself out – with a folding saw supplied by a fellow paraglider who dropped down to supply it – one of around half a dozen circling in the sky offering help. "Paragliders help each other out. There's a lot of camaraderie – and a lot of humour too", says Martin, who wasn't hurt. "I take my own cutters now."

Martin is thrilled to have discovered the delights of paragliding. It also helps him remember and celebrate good times with his late father up in the sky. He found this echoed in a book on paragliding *Out of the Blue* by Michael Kemball, which explores paragliding, Zen and spirituality.

It's all a long way from motocross racing – Martin's chosen sport when younger – an "extreme sport that can be very punishing. I packed it in a few years ago. I was all about speed and competing," says Martin, who now rides a Suzuki Bandit 1200 – but not in competitions. And no, he doesn't have any plans to compete in the sky.

"Paragliding is incredible. I'd recommend it to anyone who wants to get up there and explore," says Martin. For a man who has spent his working life helping to fight fire with water, looking down on the earth from the air has brought huge satisfactions.

British Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association: www.bhpa.co.uk

Prize quiz



Win £150 of Bonus Bonds

To win £150 of Bonus Bonds vouchers please send your answers by 28 February 2013 on a postcard to: Prize Competition (Jan/Feb 2013) FBU Head Office, Bradley House, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 7AE. Please include your name, address and membership number. The winner will be selected at random from all correct entries.

1 What was prohibited in the US in January 1920?

- A Drinking alcohol on a Sunday
- B Drinking alcohol
- C The sale, manufacture and transportation of alcohol
- D Driving on a Sunday

2 Whose birthday is celebrated by a public holiday on the third Monday in January in the USA?

- A Abraham Lincoln
- B John F Kennedy
- C Martin Luther King
- D Bobby Kennedy

3 Which city has a name that literally translates into English as "River of January"?

- A Ciudad Juarez
- B Jabalpur
- C Rioja
- D Rio de Janeiro



PA PHOTOS

4 Which famous Scot's birthday is celebrated annually on 25th January?

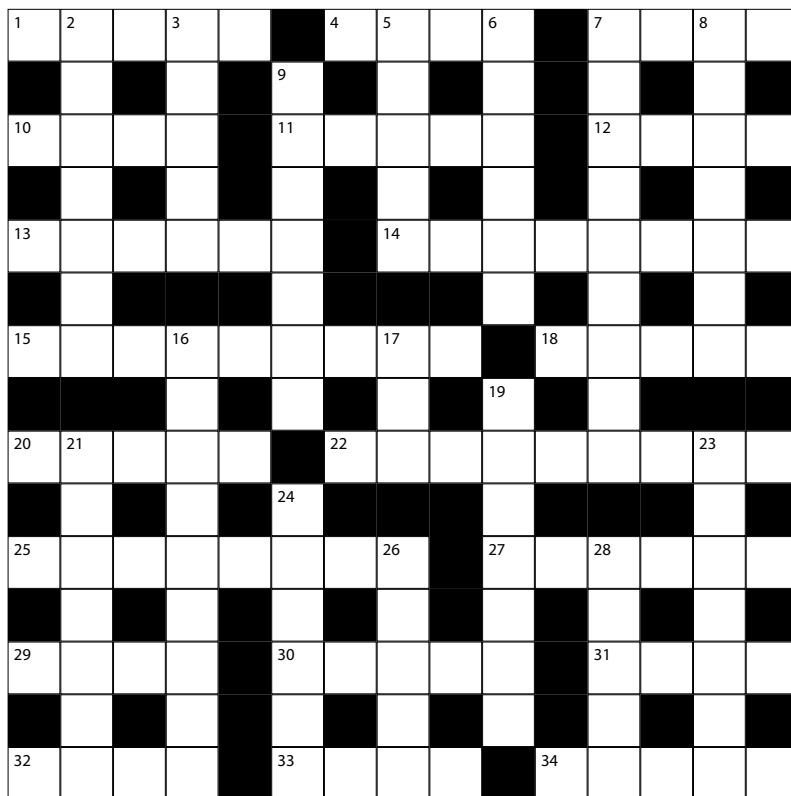
- A Billy Connolly
- B Sean Connery
- C Robert Burns
- D Rod Stewart

5 The euro became legal tender in 12 of the European member states on 1 January of what year?

- A 2000
- B 2002
- C 1999
- D 1990



PA PHOTOS



CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1, 26 down** One of the four on 999 (10)
- 4** One of the four on 999 (4)
- 7** Car, US style (4)
- 10** Male deer (4)
- 11** Eject - from 14? (5)
- 12** Boast - at cards? (4)
- 13** Cold season (6)
- 14** Living place (8)
- 15** Not the one to shoot! (9)
- 18** Go in (5)
- 20** 1,000kg (5)
- 22** Golden dog (9)
- 25** Butcher of railways 50 years ago (8)
- 27** One of the four on 999 (6)
- 29** Cook in oven (4)
- 30** In which to avoid sun (5)
- 31** Gas used in lighting; tropical fish (4)
- 32** Earth's satellite (4)
- 33** This bird is no more! (4)
- 34** Not a good place to be without a paddle (5)

DOWN

- 2** Not indoors (7)
- 3** Sense facilitated by 17 (5)
- 5** Homer's work (5)
- 6** One or t'other (6)
- 7** One of the four on 999 (9)
- 8** One learning trade (7)
- 9** Fish - avoid the red one! (7)
- 16** Apply this if working 2 and not in the 30 (9)
- 17** Organ found in a storm? (3)
- 19** Remove this before eating the sweet (7)
- 21** Herb (7)
- 23** Fence off - or include something with letter (7)
- 24** Inclined or prejudiced (6)
- 26** See 1
- 28** Big passenger vessel (5)

Last month's answers and winners



Crossword solution November/December

November/December quiz answers


- 1.** A - Laurel and Hardy
- 2.** C - Emperor penguins
- 3.** A - Trainspotting
- 4.** D - RMS Carpathia
- 5.** B - DCI Jackie Malton

Winner of the October quiz
Ian Hunt, Durham

Station Cat

Relying on the rich and the private

Resource management

 When is privatisation not privatisation? When Russell Pearson, chief fire officer of Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, says it's not, that's when. He's commissioned a company called Specialist Group International (SGI) to "provide round the clock support to SFRS in operations where it has unique expertise".

Examples, he says, include working on or under water, in confined spaces, or at heights, but it could be anything which SFRS hasn't got the resources to manage. Is this privatisation? No, says Mr Pearson. Absolutely not. We're not privatising a thing.

Now, obviously, Mr Pearson is being more than economical with the truth here – he's being positively stingy with it. But at least he's only privatising things SFRS hasn't the resources to handle itself, isn't he? Well, sort of.


You see, the money to pay SGI comes from SFRS's vehicles and equipment fund. Which means that every pound paid to the company is a pound less for SFRS to use to buy its own equipment. Which means that the longer they go on paying SGI, the less equipment it will have. And the less equipment it has, the more it will rely on SGI.

Business as usual

 Your Cat hazards a guess that Surrey's fire chief Mr Pearson attended

the Chief Fire Officers' Association ICT conference and exhibition this year. It was generously hosted by IBM, a company that sells ICT. The keynote address was all about "technology driving business change to realise efficiencies and savings, rather than just as a support service". Or to put it another way, how IBM can help you get rid of people. It was delivered by one Mark Palmer, whose job title is "IBM European Vice-President, Public Sector Business".

AssetCo is bad luck for the Irish

 The curse of AssetCo – the company which owned and maintained all London's fire appliances until it was forced to hand them over so as to pay its debts – has spread to the Republic of Ireland.


Thirty people have lost their jobs at a call centre in County Donegal, according to Station Cat's old friend, the investigative journalist David Hencke. They don't know whether they will get paid for their last two weeks' work, but they do know they're not getting redundancy money.

They say they'd like the London Fire Brigade to know how badly they are being treated. LFB bosses, however, haven't ever shown a lot of interest in that sort of thing.

They didn't bat an eyelid when AssetCo sold all London's fire engines and the contract to maintain them to one Sir Aubrey Brocklebank for just £2. Sir Aubrey's company has

now gone into administration, only four months after it was set up.

There's always one ...


 Sterling work by North Yorkshire firefighters last month to stop their local hospital being overwhelmed by flooding. Firefighters warned motorists not to drive past "road closed" signs or to drive through flood water.

Sadly, one 4x4 driver ignored the advice and broke down. Luckily, no need to mobilise firefighters, as the motorist was the chief fire officer Nigel Hutchinson, who at least managed to extricate himself. No need for embarrassment. Enough said. Won't happen again.



JOHN WATTS ROBERTSON

Part-time chopper

 There is, of course, another way. Wiltshire FRS is proving that you don't have to buy in your essential equipment from a company. You can beg someone rich to lend it to you instead.

Wiltshire FRS doesn't have a helicopter. However, millionaire local businessman Jeremy Paxton (*above*) does.


This is fortunate, says

Wiltshire CFO Simon Routh-Jones: "It can take an hour for fire tenders to cross the county to major incidents."

So lives will be saved – but only if they have the sense to get into trouble on the three days of the week that Mr Paxton is making his helicopter available to Wiltshire FRS. On the other four days of the week, they can drown. Or fry.

Mr Paxton says he was surprised to discover that the fire service didn't have its own airborne support, and no wonder.

Doing very nicely, thank you

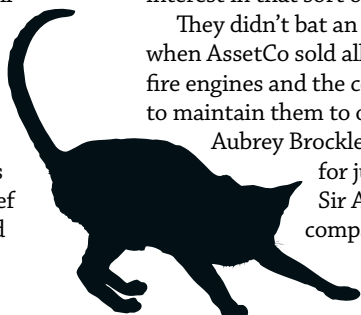
 The chief fire officers from six out of seven of England's biggest metropolitan areas have issued a stark warning to ministers about the "potentially catastrophic impact" of continued cuts on the service. The seventh, whose name is not on the letter, is London's Ron Dobson.

Mr Dobson does not want to make this point. We do not know why, but we do know that Mr Dobson is doing very nicely thank you. In 2011 he retired from his £200,000-a-year post, aged 52, received an estimated £700,000 payoff, and then walked straight back into his former job.

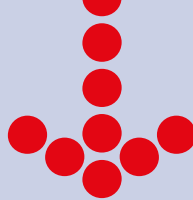
London Fire Brigade is facing massive cuts, being forced to save more than £65m, which may mean closing a quarter of the capital's fire stations closing and 800 firefighters losing their jobs.

But to Mr Dobson, everything that really matters is being looked after, thank you.

Ron Dobson:
London's
chief fire
officer is
doing very
nicely



25-year badges



Peter McCarthy (l), blue watch, Birkenhead, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Andy Bayley



Sandra Butt (l), Devon and Somerset control, receives her 25-year badge from brigade chair Bob Walker



Kev Hornsey (r) receives his 25-year badge from region 6 secretary Gary Mitchell



Sheldon Fenning (r) receives his 25-year badge from region 6 secretary Gary Mitchell



Alwyn Shipley (centre, l), receives his 25-year badge from station rep Zook Ema with members of red watch, East Hull, Humberside (l-r) Paul Towers, Chris Langdon, Johnny Thompson, Chris Banks, Gaz Teal and Daz Johnson



Richard Dykes (l), Cambridgeshire, receives his 25-year badge from general secretary Matt Wrack



Adrian Clarke (l), region 9 Secretary (since retired), receives his 25-year badge from general secretary Matt Wrack



Neil King (r) receives his 25-year badge from region 6 secretary Gary Mitchell



Michael Wynne (r) receives his 25-year badge from region 6 secretary Gary Mitchell



Norman James (r) receives his 25-year badge from region 6 secretary Gary Mitchell



Dave Warren (r), Cambridgeshire HQ, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Phil McQuillen



Jon Neish (r), Cambridgeshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Phil McQuillen



Paul Cushing (r) receives his 25-year badge from region 6 secretary Gary Mitchell



Kev Denham (r) receives his 25-year badge from region 6 secretary Gary Mitchell



Paul Taylor (r) receives his 25-year badge from region 6 secretary Gary Mitchell



(l to r) **Dave Wolton, Terry Rogers, Laurie Brightman, Austin Curran and Russell Padgett**, of Heston, London, white watch receive their 25-year badges from brigade discipline rep Laurie Brightman (centre)



David McQuillen (l) Dogs-thorpe, and **Nigel Measures** (r), Stanground, receive their 25-year badges from Cambridgeshire brigade chair Phil McQuillen



Kev Murtough (r), Pontefract red watch, West Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from divisional secretary Billy Delve with red watch looking on



Andrew Bairstow (l) and **Stephen Schofield** (r), West Yorkshire Training Centre, receive their 25-year badges from branch rep Ben Paolozzi



Mark Jones (r), blue watch, Guildford, Surrey, receives his 25-year badge from rep Freddie Butwell.



Steve Parr (r) receives his 25-year badge from region 6 secretary Gary Mitchell



Pete Sanderson (l), East Grinstead rep, receives his 25-year badge from West Sussex brigade secretary Foff Bishop.



Stewart Robertson (r) receives his 25-year badge from region 6 secretary Gary Mitchell



Carl Francis (l) area commander, Suffolk, receives his 25-year badge from brigade fairness at work rep Andy Message.



Wayne Wrigg (r) Wetherby, West Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Jack Parnell with red watch colleagues looking on



Martin Rodmell (r), white watch, Welwyn Garden City, receives his 25 year badge from branch H&S rep Adrian Kimber with colleagues from white and green watch.



Pete Blundle (r) receives his 25-year badge from region 6 secretary Gary Mitchell



Ronnie Eatough (r), Clitheroe, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Alan Anderson.



Rob Martin (r) receives his 25-year badge from region 6 secretary Gary Mitchell



Kim Taylor (r), Chichester, West Sussex, receives his 25-year badge from brigade education rep Rick Williams



Tom Murray (r) receives his 25-year badge from region 6 secretary Gary Mitchell

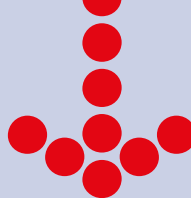


Mick Deacon (r) blue watch, Medway, Kent, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Mark Simmons with blue watch colleagues looking on



Bob Bryant (l), retired, receives his 25-year badge from London officers' secretary Pan Poullais

25-year badges



Nigel Dodd (l), Brighouse, West Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Ben Paolozzi



Des Keeling (l), Sandyford, Staffordshire, receives his 25-year badge from region 7 EC member Rose Jones



Russell Holmes (r), West Yorkshire Training Centre, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Ben Paolozzi.



Chris Thornton (r) receives his 25-year badge from region 6 secretary Gary Mitchell



Nick Welham (l), green watch, Chelmsford, Essex, receives his 25-year badge from FBU official Martin Ketley



Jon Colbourne (r) receives his 25-year badge from region 6 secretary Gary Mitchell



Adey Mitchell (r) receives his 25-year badge from region 6 secretary Gary Mitchell



Phil Pinchen (l), receives his 25-year badge from London officers' secretary Pan Poullais



Jan Szablowski (r) receives his 25-year badge from region 6 secretary Gary Mitchell



Daryl Palmer (l), Halling, Kent, receives his 25-year badge from brigade rep Mark Burren



Janice Dmytreczko (r) receives her 25-year badge from region 6 secretary Gary Mitchell



Keith Handscomb (l), region 9 EC member, receives his 25-year badge from Essex official Paul Adams.



Bill Watson (r), red watch, Weston Super Mare, receives his 25-year badge from Avon brigade membership and health and safety rep John Maggs.



Brother Devine (r), Cambridgeshire, is congratulated on 25 years' service by London region officers' secretary Pan Poullais in New York

Please send photographic prints or digital picture files to: Firefighter, FBU, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT2 7AE or firefighter@fbu.org.uk. Please include full details for every picture – full names of everyone who is in it; their station/brigade/watch etc; where they are in the picture (eg: left to right); their union posts/branch if relevant; and where and when it was taken.

FBU regional offices

REGION 1 Scotland

52 St Enoch Square, Glasgow, Scotland G1 4AA
0141 221 2309, 01rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 2 Northern Ireland

14 Bachelors Walk, Lisburn, Co Antrim, BT28 1XJ
02892 664622, 02rs@fbu.org

REGION 3 Cleveland, Durham, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear

1 Carlton Court, 5th Avenue, Team Valley, Gateshead, NE11 0AZ
0191 487 4142, 03rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 4 Yorks and Humberside

9 Marsh Street, Rothwell, Leeds, LS26 0AG
0113 288 7000, 04rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 5 Greater Manchester, Lancs, Isle of Man, Cumbria, Merseyside, Cheshire

The Lighthouse, Lower Mersey St, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH65 2AL
0151 357 4400, 05rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 6 Derbyshire, Notts, Lincs, Leics, Northants

Little Dennis Street South (above Dawsons), Nottingham NG2 4EU
0115 947 2042, 06gen@fbu.org.uk

REGION 7 West Mids, Staffs, Warks, Hereford & Worcester, Salop

195/7 Halesowen Rd, Old Hill, West Midlands, B64 6HE
01384 413633, 07rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 8 Mid and West Wales, North Wales, South Wales

4 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, Pencoed, Bridgend, CF35 5LJ
01656 867910, 08rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 9 Herts, Beds, Cambs, Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk

28 Atlantic Square, Station Road, Witham, Essex, CM8 2TL
01376 521521, 09rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 10 London

John Horner Mews, Frome Street, Islington, London, N1 8PB
020 7359 3638, london@fbu.org.uk

REGION 11 Kent, Surrey, Sussex

Unit 11, Hunns Mere Way, Woodingdean, Brighton, BN2 6AH
01273 309762, 11rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 12 Bucks, Berks, Hants, Oxon, Isle of Wight

FBU Regional Office, The Merlin Centre, Unit L, Gatehouse Close, Aylesbury HP19 8DP
01296 482297, 12rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 13 Cornwall, Devon and Somerset, Avon, Gloucs, Wilts, Dorset

158 Muller Road, Horfield, Bristol, BS7 9RE
0117 935 5132, 13rs@fbu.org.uk

Change of address or next of kin

Advise your Brigade Organiser of any change of address and Head Office of changes to next of kin or nominations for benefits.

FBU FREEPHONE LEGAL ADVICE LINE 0808 100 6061

The line provides advice for personal injury, family law, wills, conveyancing, personal finance and consumer issues.

For disciplinary and employment-related queries contact your local FBU representative.